

The Honorable Fred Upton  
2183 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Upton:

The undersigned organizations represent patients, consumers and health advocacy groups, many of which include at-risk populations. We applaud your efforts to expedite treatments and cures for Americans, particularly those who need access to the most innovative treatments as soon as they are deemed safe and effective.

Our constituents are particularly interested in immunization language in your proposed language for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures. They believe strongly in vaccinations for both public health and for their own personal medical situations, which are often compromised due to illness. Through the years, vaccines have been proven to prevent a whole spectrum of diseases, and the research that continues today holds great promise for improving existing vaccines and developing others to protect us from disease. Those vaccines undoubtedly saved lives of both young and old, and attention must be given to making new vaccines available as soon as possible.

Our constituents favor a standard process for addressing new and improved vaccines. Sadly, we have witnessed delays in the current system, which had tragic results on children, seniors and those compromised by chronic medical conditions. Every day of delay is another day of dangerous exposure to these vulnerable populations when they are kept from accessing vaccines.

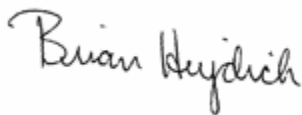
Currently, we face an intergenerational challenge because vaccines are needed by every age segment of the population and every age is also affected by barriers that keep them from accessing new therapies that prevent illness. Unfortunately, one of the barriers has been the unpredictable length of the ACIP process. Many of our constituents are beneficiaries of Medicare and Medicaid and, therefore, must wait until CMS has acted in order to receive coverage for critical preventive medicine. Delays in the ACIP process mean delays in CMS coverage decisions, and that translates to delays for patients.

Your committee has thoughtfully and skillfully looked into this issue and drafted language that will ameliorate the wait for new vaccines. We understand that the intent of this language is to ensure ACIP's attention and action within an appropriate period of time and trust that your informed decision-makers will determine the specific language that ultimately will protect the public interest.

Our organizations heartily agree that guidelines must be put in place to ensure ACIP review of vaccines in an appropriate, efficient and expeditious manner. Providing a timeline helps ACIP prioritize its deliberations while at the same time it helps patients and providers make sound medical decisions.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures initiative provides great structure for bringing to fruition the medical discoveries of this new century. We appreciate your efforts to make certain these new therapies and cures reach patients as quickly as possible. Thank you for your work and your consideration of our thoughts.

Sincerely,



Brian Hujdich  
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American Autoimmune and Related Diseases Association (AARDA)  
Retiresafe  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

The AIDS Institute  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
Veterans Health Council  
National Consumers League  
National Minority Quality Forum  
Caregivers Action Network

cc: Representative Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee